



**South Mountain Corridor Study
Citizens Advisory Team
Meeting Summary**

Date: August 12, 2008
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: South Mountain Community College

SMCAT Members Attending:

Camilo Acosta, Arlington HOA
Laurel Arndt, Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee
Steve Barclay, Valley Forward
Lisa Bray, South Mountain/Laveen Chamber of Commerce
Al Brown, Arizona Public Health Association
Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
Wes Lines, Laveen Village Planning Committee
Fred Lopez, Foothills Reserve HOA
Scott Mittelsteadt, Sierra Club
Laurie Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
John Rodriguez, Lakewood HOA
Brian Smith, Calabrea HOA
Timothy Stone, Bougainvillea HOA
Carola Tamarkin, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Carnell Thurman, City of Avondale

SMCAT Members Absent:

Gila River Indian Community–District 4
Chad Blostone, The Foothills HOA
Tamala Daniels, South Mountain Village Planning Committee
Clayton Danzeisen, Maricopa County Farm Bureau
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
Diane Kreckler, Mountain Park Ranch HOA
Nathaniel Percharo, Pecos Road/I-10 Landowners Association
Jack Sellers, East Valley Partnership
Terry Tatterfield, Kyrene Elementary School District
Woody Thomas, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
Dave Williams, Arizona Trucking Association

Staff and Consultants

Michael Bruder, ADOT
 Mark Hollowell, ADOT
 Velvet Mathew, ADOT
 Floyd Roehrich, ADOT
 Timothy Tait, ADOT
 Bill Vachon, FHWA
 Michael Book, HDR
 Amy Edwards, HDR
 Janet Gonzalez, HDR

Heather Honsberger, HDR
 Scott Mars, HDR
 George Oamek, HDR
 Ben Spargo, HDR
 Fred Erickson, KCA
 Tom Keller, KCA
 C. Murphy Hebert, PDG
 Dean Howard, PDG

Citizens:

Brett Bannister
 Kerry Fehr-Snyder
 Jim Jochim
 Steve Johnson

Tim Lank
 Pat Lawlis
 Doug Murphy
 Jason Walker

Meeting Agenda	Speaker
Welcome and introductions	Tom Keller, KCA
SMCAT role and responsibilities	Tom Keller, KCA
Upcoming SMCAT meeting topics	Tom Keller, KCA
Team member questions and comments	All
Economic Impacts	George Oamek, HDR
Utilities	Mike Bruder, ADOT Ben Spargo, HDR
Prime and Unique Farmlands	Mark Hollowell, ADOT Scott Mars, HDR
Visitor comment session	Public Tom Keller, KCA

Meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Tom Keller: Good evening everyone. Please take your seats.

Welcome to the August 12 South Mountain Freeway Citizens Advisory Team meeting. This meeting was initially scheduled for July 24. Due to a situation beyond our control, we were able to reschedule this meeting for this evening. I appreciate your flexibility with this change to the schedule. We will stay on schedule for our next meeting on August 28.

I would like to welcome those people who are here as substitutes for the regular SMCAT members. Steve Barclay is a new member of the team replacing Dave Olney with Valley Forward. Fred Lopez is here tonight in place of Cathy Lopez with the Foothills Reserve HOA. We also have Scott Mittelsteadt here for Sandy Bahr with the Sierra Club.

At this point, we are one person shy of a quorum. If another member arrives, I will mention it. *(A SMCAT member arrived shortly after, so meeting had a quorum, but this was not announced by facilitator.)*

The normal process for these meetings is to first remind everyone about the SMCAT roles and responsibilities. The SMCAT is a voluntary advisory team, not a decision-making body, and it will not be responsible for decisions made by the State of Arizona or the Federal Highway Administration. The SMCAT will meet regularly to review project status and provide input on issues that are relevant to the project. Remember that the single purpose of the SMCAT is to provide a build or no-build recommendation for this proposed freeway.

Each member of the SMCAT represents their constituents. We hope that you take the information in your packets that is presented here tonight back to the organization that you represent.

We have a standard protocol for these meetings. SMCAT members are expected to treat each other with mutual courtesy, respect and dignity. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and will be grounds for exclusion from further participation in these meetings.

If you take a look at tonight's agenda, there are three scheduled topics. It is the team's preference to take as much time as necessary during these meetings in order to have everyone's questions answered. If we don't get to one of the scheduled topics, we will table that presentation for a future meeting. We will try to establish a break around 7:30 p.m. We won't take the break in the middle of a topic.

For those visiting us for the first time, note that we have a formalized process for submitting the questions the public may have. If you have any questions, please grab a blue question card from Janet Gonzalez and Murphy Hebert, who are sitting at the table in the back of the room. At the end of this meeting, we have allowed for time for the public to submit questions. You should write your question on the blue question card and then either read the question or hand it to me and I will read your question. If you would like me to read your question, please make sure you print clearly.

Is there anything else?

Here is a list of the future meeting topics as we go forward. This information is in your packet every month.

Finally, I want to remind the SMCAT members that I will be passing out the session feedback forms at the break. Please remember to complete these forms and return them to the team at the end of the meeting.

Does anyone have any comments?

SMCAT Member: My question is regarding the future meeting topics. I see that the topics for the August 28 meeting are Section 4(f) and 6(f) resources and cultural resources, which are some of the hottest topics we will be discussing. Many of us have vacations scheduled for August, which will conflict with us being able to attend this meeting, myself included. I will probably not be here. Is there any way to take these topics and move them to the September meeting and have different topics for the August 28 meeting?

Tom Keller: Do any members of the team have comments about this?

SMCAT Member: What was his suggestion?

Tom Keller: He was suggesting that we move the August 28 scheduled topics to the September meeting.

SMCAT Member: What would be appropriate substitute material for the August 28 meeting?

Timothy Tait: No, this is something we would be unable to do.

SMCAT Member: Are there any topics that were scheduled for past meetings that weren't presented to us due to time constraints that could be presented at the August 28 meeting?

Ben Spargo: Social conditions is the only topic that we weren't able to present due to time constraints. In general, we have already lined up the speakers and materials for the August 28 meeting. I am not saying we can't shift the topics, but telling you some of the issues.

SMCAT Member: I would prefer to stay on schedule.

SMCAT Member: I would like to have the August 28 topics presented at another meeting, but if it can't be done, it can't be done.

Tom Keller: Are there any issues that any of the SMCAT members have heard in the media or read in the press?

No response

Tom Keller: Okay. We will go ahead and get started. I will manage the time so that we will have our break around 7 or 7:10 p.m.

As always, Ben Spargo is here to present the next portion of the presentation.

Ben Spargo: Tonight's topics for discussion are economic impacts, utilities within the corridor and prime and unique farmlands. For each of these topics, there is coordination with each of the agencies that are shown on the screen.

I will now turn the presentation over to George Oamek, who has flown in from the Midwest to present the economic impacts.

George Oamek: I am an economist. What do I do as an economist? Well, I have not yet formulated an answer that satisfies my daughter.

When it comes to this study, there are a couple of questions I should answer first. What are economic impacts and why do we look at them? The economic impacts are all those issues related to the dollar signs in this study. When it comes to freeway construction, this amounts to generally three areas: displacements and relocations of businesses, fiscal impacts on local governments and the impacts on the traveling public.

The impact to the traveling public would be related to the reduced traffic congestion should this proposed freeway be constructed. Everyone hates sitting in our cars in traffic. This waste of time is costing each of us money. How much is this wasted time worth?

Why do we study economic impacts? In this case, the construction and operation of the proposed freeway could alter economic characteristics in the Study Area. The proposed freeway would provide for better access for transportation which could reduce travel times overall. For area businesses, this would reduce costs.

The potential project could affect: where people live and work, travel patterns, delivery of public services and public sector revenues.

Looking at the major impact displacements, construction of the W55 Alternative would cause approximately 119 businesses to be displaced, which could impact over 1,500 employees. This does not mean that they all would be unemployed, but rather, that many people may have to work in another office. ADOT would be working with the business owners to determine the relocation costs.

The Action Alternative would convert approximately 1,700 acres of Phoenix to a nontaxable use. The city of Phoenix is approximately 304,000 acres. As you can see, we are not looking at a big percentage here. That doesn't mean that this is a small issue, just in the big picture, the amount of land that would be nontaxable would be a relatively small percentage of the overall amount of land owned by the City.

To get some context, let's look at the fiscal impacts. The City of Phoenix existing revenue includes property and sales tax of approximately \$478 million per year and general fund revenue of almost \$1 billion. So basically half of the money in the general fund is generated by sales and property taxes. We have estimated that the conversion of the 1,700 acres of land into a nontaxable use will equate to a \$2 million impact. At first glance, this is a lot of money, but in terms of impact to the community, it is less than 1 percent.

In terms of future land use, we looked at the possible reduction in revenue. Since we don't know what the future revenue will be, we had to make approximations in the property and sales tax values for the W55 and E1 alternatives. We estimated this value as being \$18 million. There is no way to determine the exact percentages, but I would tend to think it would still be less than 1 percent of the total revenue for the city.

What are the potential impacts after construction? A huge impact would be the time savings to the traveling public. That is really why this freeway would be built.

So, how much would the traveling time be reduced and how do we determine this value to the commuter? We determined that the estimated savings to the traveling public would equate to \$16.25 per hour. This was determined based on the average of the activities that people are doing as they are driving. It is anticipated that should the freeway be open to traffic in 2016 through the design year of 2030, the total savings for the traveling public would be \$5.9 billion. This was estimated based on a fairly conservative value of \$400 million in savings per year. This means that the time savings would be 3.5 times the cost of the projected \$1.7 billion freeway construction cost. I know it is hard to conceive an amount of a billion dollars. But we are looking at \$1.7 billion for the freeway construction versus the time savings of almost \$6 billion.

SMCAT Member: I am confused. Should the freeway be constructed, there will be certain traffic patterns. Are your numbers assuming there would be a constant population? As more people move to the Valley, the freeways will continue to be as congested as they are now.

Ben Spargo: There was a study done which compared regional traffic congestion of today with predicted 2030 congestion values. The future congestion values were then evaluated as a region-wide component of total travel time. The No-Action and Action alternatives were compared with these 2030 values. The difference was what we are presenting as the time savings.

George Oamek: The 2030 regional traffic congestion values we used represented the anticipated area growth. We didn't assume that the population would remain constant. We extrapolated the values based on area growth projections.

Ben Spargo: Yes, we were mindful of area population growth when looking at travel times for the No-Action and Action alternatives.

SMCAT Member: I am trying to figure out the math that was done on slide 20. How did you get \$18.4 million and how does that stack up when looking at slide 22?

George Oamek: We never tried to add the information together from slides 20 and 22. This would be like comparing apples and oranges. The \$400 million dollars per year in travel cost saving would be the yearly economic benefit. The \$16.25 per hour time savings is not a toll; it is an estimate of a benefit to the traveling public by them spending less time in congestion.

SMCAT Member: When you determined the \$1.7 billion freeway construction cost, did you include the potential business relocation costs?

George Oamek: Yes, this was included in the total.

SMCAT Member: When we discussed traffic in a past meeting, we talked about reducing travel time for trips from Chandler Boulevard and Interstate 10 to the West Valley, for example. The statement at that time was that the South Mountain Freeway would reduce the trip to three to four minutes rather than using the Broadway Curve. When I do the math, I come up with a savings to the traveling public of 27 cents per hour as the savings. These means the three to four minute savings for the trip I mentioned earlier would equate to a total savings of \$1.50. I think these are the numbers you should be talking about. I take exception that you are suggesting that the value to the traveling public is \$16.25 per hour. Do you understand what I am saying?

George Oamek: Yes, I understand what you are saying. We are dealing with regional congestion time here.

SMCAT Member: This is traffic data that was given to us at the previous meeting.

Ben Spargo: The analysis presented in the December meeting showed representative trips in the Study Area. The purpose of this was to show the level of regional travel time savings. When talking about the cost savings here, the important thing to remember is that it is the accumulation of all the regional travel.

SMCAT Member: I don't think that this cost savings should be looked at as a dollar amount per hour. There is much more information that has an economic impact to this study, which I haven't seen anywhere. I remember Bill Vachon specifically saying that some of these additional items would be addressed. I would like to see that kind of balance. The *if you build it, they will come mentality* is not reflected here. Especially since people's driving patterns have changed over the last year due to rising energy costs, it sounds to me that we are sitting on old data again.

Ben Spargo: The \$16.25 value came from estimations regarding travel activities in the area. Regarding your other issue, the traffic projections that were used came from the Maricopa Association of Governments' latest traffic data.

SMCAT Member: This is a bad time to be doing this study when we are seeing such a shift in drivers' travel habits. What about the issue of induced travel and growth? When will this be presented?

Ben Spargo: This issue will be presented as part of the topic of secondary and cumulative impacts.

SMCAT Member: George, did you prepare this information or are you just presenting it?

George Oamek: I prepared this information.

SMCAT Member: I represent a community of 90 homes. I have a few concerns associated with this proposed freeway. I want information about the loss of homeowners association's funds for those homes that would be removed as part of this potential project. What should be expected for the loss of home values and the associated loss of property taxes and tax revenues for the state, city and schools? What about the loss of the community's desirability due to the freeway "locking in" the community? It would be a degradation to the entire Ahwatukee community. What about the cost of air quality and the health issues created for residents and schoolchildren? What about the loss of value of the South Mountain Park and the ridgelines, which would be destroyed? What about the loss of value and future tax revenue on state trust land? I don't see any values for what the state trust land is worth. You have said that the value to the traveling public is \$16.25 per hour. There should be an amount for the value of the state trust land, which will be devalued. I don't see where you have addressed any of these issues for our area, which would have a huge impact. Can these items be addressed?

Tom Keller: Mike, did you get all of that?

Michael Book: Yes, but it would be helpful if you could provide me with a list at the break of all the issues you mentioned.

George Oamek: The economic impacts could be reflected in a person's property value.

SMCAT Member: Since you prepared the report, can you discuss how you evaluated property values?

George Oamek: Property values were evaluated qualitatively.

SMCAT Member: Can you please explain what you mean?

George Oamek: We looked at the property values for the alignments in the Western Section.

SMCAT Member: What about property values for the Eastern Section?

George Oamek: We did not discuss those.

SMCAT Member: Well that was a huge miss. Economic impacts don't only affect commercial properties, they affect residential properties too. I am kind of surprised that was not included.

Tom Keller: Any other questions or comments?

SMCAT Member: ADOT has put a monetary figure on time. Can they put a monetary value on vision or view? I know two people who have an acre of land overlooking a horse pasture. The view is absolutely gorgeous. One person who owns this land is in the path of the proposed freeway and he is happy waiting for his money ticket. The other person would be next to the freeway and would not receive any compensation from ADOT. She will now have her view obstructed by a 20-foot wall. Do you have a value that takes this into account? If she sold her property, she could get \$1.5 million, but she would not be able to get this amount if the view from the property included looking at a 20-foot wall. The loss of monetary value is huge for the people who are left behind.

George Oamek: We didn't specifically look the monetary value associated with the loss of property views. The ADOT relocation experts negotiate this when purchasing properties.

SMCAT Member: I haven't heard of them doing this for anyone whose property is not located within the freeway right-of-way.

SMCAT Member: Couldn't some of the \$18 million revenue loss for the city be offset by commercial development along the freeway corridor?

George Oamek: Yes, the presumption is that businesses, hospitals, etcetera would be built along the freeway.

SMCAT Member: I understand that there would be many proposed shopping areas, which would also include employment opportunities.

George Oamek: Historically, freeways help spur area economic development.

SMCAT Member: George, so you are an economist?

George Oamek: Yes.

SMCAT Member: What is your last name?

George Oamek: Oamek.

SMCAT Member: And you work for ADOT?

George Oamek: No, I work for HDR, in the Omaha office.

SMCAT Member: Can you give me an estimate on what the latest cost is to construct this freeway?

George Oamek: Well, I know there has been a tremendous increase in the costs of steel and concrete. In the last four years, construction material costs have increased over 22 percent.

Ben Spargo: We have discussed this issue before.

SMCAT Member: I would like to hear his answer.

SMCAT Member: Does the \$400 million in savings factor in the loss of homes?

George Oamek: Yes, acquiring homes is factored into this figure.

Ben Spargo: Well, the estimated \$1.7 billion would include right-of-way acquisition. The \$400 million is strictly the monetary savings by reducing the time that motorists spend in traffic.

SMCAT Member: What about the potential economic impacts from health affects associated with the freeway? Several studies have put a dollar amount on air quality impacts.

George Oamek: The change in a person's health is typically not studied as part of the economic analysis for these types of projects. From what I understand, improved highway mobility tends to improve air quality.

SMCAT Member: When and if you have some revised information, will ADOT be incorporating that into the economic impact section of the Draft EIS?

Ben Spargo: If you are referring to air quality, revised information would be incorporated into the section dealing with air quality and not economic impacts.

SMCAT Member: As a planner myself, I know it is easy to study the quantifiable information by looking at what would be removed by this potential freeway. What you need to look at is to determine what is negatively left behind as a result of the construction of the freeway. It is easy to think of the positive impacts. I think some of

these issues you have said will be reported in the presentation dealing with secondary and cumulative impacts. I would consider many of these issues as primary. These issues are critical to the residents of the area. If they aren't included, it's not a balanced report. Are they in there?

Mike Bruder: The impacts to people who would not be in the freeway right-of-way are not compensable under state law.

SMCAT Member: Now that is a sad statement.

Amy Edwards: Each one of you has issues that are important to you and we will look at what issues you are bringing forward tonight. It is important to remember that our study doesn't necessarily encompass everything. We are currently evaluating all of the data we have gathered and we are following the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines for evaluating and reporting it. I can't say that we will be answering every potential question out there, but we will try.

SMCAT Member: I am only asking for a baseline. Our universe has changed drastically in 20 years. How can we continue to just be using the same standards that were used then? I think there is a conversation that needs to take place concerning this. Induced growth wasn't even discussed when the NEPA was enacted. The Federal Highway Administration should request that this be included in the Draft EIS.

Bill Vachon: Those things you brought up are included in the report. Property values next to freeways can be subjective. Some people enjoy the access to the freeway system by living nearby, while others don't enjoy it. This issue is difficult to measure because it depends who is giving you the information.

SMCAT Member: By not having this in the balance of the report, it seems like ADOT considers this a nonissue.

Bill Vachon: A decision on this freeway can't be made based on an individual topic. The study team is looking at all the issues from a regional perspective.

SMCAT Member: I understand that you can't show us one thing one way and then another time show it a different way. I am only asking that you are consistent. The same standard should be held across the whole system. You can't show us the detail for one issue and then not give us any details on another issue.

Amy Edwards: She brings up a good point. NEPA is an umbrella which is composed of many other laws and guidelines, which are updated regularly. Because of this, we are looking at issues, which have come about recently, such as mobile source air toxins.

SMCAT Member: I think a lot of the questions that I had have already been asked. Somehow, I am missing the whole premise that the construction of this freeway is

positive for traffic mobility. There is going to be a lot of development, which has not been accounted for. This freeway will cause more stress to adjoining areas and create more backup on arterial streets. I think the construction of this freeway may create another Broadway Curve congestion-type problem for us. By the way, it has been mentioned that the freeway would cost \$1.7 billion. I thought the cost was now over \$2 billion.

There is a disruption for a couple of minutes after a SMCAT member's chair breaks

Amy Edwards: The traffic projections we have been using are regional in nature, but they take into account traffic on the local streets.

George Oamek: Although the traffic on the side streets is different, it is included in the analysis.

SMCAT Member: George, were you involved putting the numbers in the Draft EIS?

George Oamek: Yes.

SMCAT Member: You are one of the experts?

George Oamek: Yes.

SMCAT Member: So for this project, how much money has already been spent on this study?

Amy Edwards: That is not a number that George would have.

SMCAT Member: I only want a general number. Would you say it is over \$300 million?

Amy Edwards: ADOT might have this information.

SMCAT Member: Can we receive this information at the next SMCAT meeting?

Mike Bruder: Yes, this information will be provided at the next meeting.

SMCAT Member: Do you think that it would be close to \$300 million?

Mike Bruder: I would say it is not nearly that much.

SMCAT Member: Can you just put it in your mind and write down some numbers? Just jot down some figures what you think it would cost.

Amy Edwards: I appreciate your time.

SMCAT Member: I am not done here. Come on, just give us a number.

Tom Keller: We have time for one last question.

SMCAT Member: What about the question I raised? Will it be addressed?

Ben Spargo: Your question will be addressed in the parking lot issues memorandum.

SMCAT Member: You presented the time savings as being \$400 million a year. Are you saying that this will save \$400 million a year without addressing secondary impacts? I think this figure is misleading to say the least. I would rather the money that is spent on this freeway be used for mass transit. Hopefully mass transit will be addressed in the upcoming transportation bill.

Tom Keller: I see we have about 2 to 3 more people with questions. We will hear from these people and then we will take our break.

SMCAT Member: Is the Draft EIS a living document which will continue to provide the most recent data or do we just have to live with the data that has already been used?

SMCAT Member: After the data has been submitted, it is done.

Bill Vachon: Only a preliminary draft has been submitted, the Draft EIS is still a living document.

SMCAT Member: It seems some of the impacts can cover multiple areas. I think we should just take the big picture approach and as ADOT presents each issue, some of these things will filter themselves out.

Tom Keller: A reminder that there are times when the study team will not be able to fully answer your questions here tonight. In these instances, the question will be captured in the parking lot issues memorandum and the answers will be given to you at a future SMCAT meeting. If you think that we haven't captured one of your questions from a past meeting, please let us know.

There are a few slides remaining in the economic impact presentation. George, if you will...

George Oamek: How can impacts be reduced or eliminated? One thing we do is try to make refinements to the design. Reductions in city tax revenues resulting from land purchase are generally not mitigated. As mentioned earlier, the combination of business benefits and reduced travel times are anticipated to offset impacts.

SMCAT Member: So development would offset the impacts?

George Oamek: That is a general statement.

SMCAT Member: The E1 Alignment abuts the Gila River Indian Community. North of the alignment is residential housing. Even if the GRIC develops 400 casinos on their land, it would not give the city the benefit of the tax revenue. So how could you say that development will offset impacts?

George Oamek: This opportunity would be seen more in the W55 Alternative.

SMCAT Member: Yes, it appears that the good of the many outweigh the good of the few.

Tom Keller: Okay, one last question.

SMCAT Member: Has anyone done a study of the economic impacts to the area after the Loop 101 was constructed? It seems that the Loop 101 was in a similar situation, with the Salt-River Pima Maricopa Indian Community on one side. This should be done as a holistic view. You might be able to get a better idea about this project's secondary impacts by looking at the secondary impacts from that project. I would also like to see what the impacts were on the area schools. I would think a study of this nature would be very valuable to an economist.

George Oamek: I couldn't agree with you more. There have been very few economic impact studies that have been done postconstruction.

SMCAT Member: I think there have been studies of this nature done in Canada.

Mike Bruder: That could be something that Arizona State University might take on.

Tom Keller: It is now 7:10 p.m. Let's take a 15-minute break. We will see you back here at 7:25 p.m.

Break

Tom Keller: Okay, can we begin please? Please grab some more food or cookies and make your way back to the table.

The plan is to end the meeting at 8:30 p.m. We may need to push a topic if we run out of time, but we can discuss that near the end of the meeting. Is everyone ready?

Oh, a couple other items. Remember that any members of the public, who want to submit a question or comment, please fill out a blue question card. I have also given the SMCAT members their session feedback forms. Please complete them and hand them back to a study team member by the end of the meeting. Mike?

Mike Bruder: I will be presenting the next topic, which is utilities. You can see that we have some definitions on this first slide.

The proposed freeway would pass over the Union Pacific Railroad. There would also be various lateral canals that would be encountered throughout the length of the freeway. Why document utilities in the EIS process? Population growth is a major factor to consider. This growth causes a need for more transportation infrastructure, which also requires more utility infrastructure.

ADOT has done a thorough review of the project area and identified all the existing utilities out there. The relocation and/or reconstruction of major utility lines and corridors would be extremely costly and could delay meeting important project milestones. ADOT has a great deal of experience on relocating utilities. We typically work with the utility companies to ensure that the process is done as efficiently as possible. A recent example of ADOT working with a utility company on a project was during the construction of the Red Mountain Freeway in the stretch from Power Road to University Drive. There were major power lines that were required to be moved.

During the EIS process, ADOT looks at the location of the various utilities in the corridor. There are a couple major utilities that we are going to try to avoid, if at all possible. They are: the substation located at 55th Avenue and Buckeye and the Kinder Morgan pipeline. There is a major sewer line underneath Pecos Road, which could not be avoided and would need to be relocated.

With that, I will turn the presentation over to Ben.

Ben Spargo: Thanks Mike. The utility investigation began by having study team members canvas the area to identify utility locations and ownership. This was all documented by the time we began looking at possible freeway alignments.

I will try to just touch on a few of the major utilities that would be impacted by the potential project. The Roosevelt Irrigation District Canal is located just north of Lower Buckeye Road. The freeway would also need to cross the Union Pacific Railroad. There are some major power lines located in the Western Section. There are a number of city storm and sewer lines located underneath some of the arterial streets within the study right-of-way. In many cases, the freeway would be going over these streets so there would be no impacts there.

In the Eastern Section, in most cases, the utilities are parallel to the proposed freeway alignment. There are a number of utilities located adjacent to or underneath Pecos Road. These utilities would be relocated to the north side of the freeway.

If the project were not constructed, there would be no project-specific impacts experienced.

How can the impacts be reduced or eliminated? The first step involves the continuing coordination with the area utility companies. That way, if there are any new utilities planned for the area, we can coordinate so that the impacts related to this proposed freeway would be mitigated. Some of these issues can be solved by making minor alignment adjustments to the proposed freeway. One of the major reasons for doing this assessment is to make sure there aren't any conflicts that would pose a fatal flaw to this potential project. At this time, there are no utilities that pose a major problem. There is nothing that we feel couldn't either be relocated or shifted within the proposed freeway alignment.

I will now open it up to any questions.

SMCAT Member: The E1 Alignment contains a 24-inch water main that runs through the South Mountains. Would this be relocated or shifted?

Ben Spargo: This major water line is located within Salt River Project right-of-way easement and not the proposed right-of-way for this freeway. It is a major item that we would consider during this project, especially when blasting in the mountain.

SMCAT Member: What about the pumping stations in the area?

Ben Spargo: The freeway would curve north of it. However, the pumping station would still need to be relocated. The City of Phoenix would be deciding the location.

SMCAT Member: I think on the overviews we have had, the freeway would go over the pumping station.

Ben Spargo: The pumping station is shown within the proposed freeway right-of-way, but there would actually be no impact to the pumping station.

SMCAT Member: So, if you need to avoid the pumping station, would it push the freeway further into my neighborhood?

Mike Bruder: The freeway would be rather constrained in this area.

SMCAT Member: Constrained to the outside or inside?

Ben Spargo: We have placed just the edge of the pumping station in the ADOT right-of-way. There would be no physical impacts to the pumping station.

SMCAT Member: The actual construction would cause the waterline to be moved how far?

Ben Spargo: No, that is not the location of the waterline. The waterline is located within Salt River Project (SRP) right-of-way.

SMCAT Member: I thought Salt River Project shared this right-of-way with ADOT.

Ben Spargo: The freeway is not restricted to the SRP right-of-way through the mountains. The freeway right-of-way is adjacent, but doesn't encroach on the utilities.

SMCAT Member: It seems like this would be a critical issue for right-of-way cost reimbursement. Are there some cases where you may need to use land outside of the right-of-way? This could be a legal issue that would need to go to the citizens.

Ben Spargo: Yes, I understand the issue. We have been advised that it would not be an issue that needs to go to the citizens.

SMCAT Member: I heard a rumor you would not relocate anything that is located south of Pecos Road?

Mike Bruder: The plan has always been to relocate the utilities that are underneath and within the proposed freeway right-of-way to the north.

SMCAT Member: What about the kV lines?

Ben Spargo: What we have shown for the proposed freeway alignment has never been shown going into the utility easement that is located south of Pecos Road.

SMCAT Member: There is a former city official who is still saying that there would be an off-ramp at 32nd Street as a part of this proposed freeway.

Timothy Tait: We have recently met with this person and they know now that there will not be an off-ramp at 32nd Street.

Tom Keller: Any more questions?

No response

Tom Keller: Okay. Let's move on to prime and unique farmland.

Mark Hollowell: Good evening, I am Mark Hollowell and I am presenting the topic of prime and unique farmland. I was here a few months ago and presented information about NEPA.

When developing the EIS, there are a number of things we study. One of these items is prime and unique farmland.

This first slide shows you some of the definitions for the terminology in this area. We are well aware there are a number of laws enacted that relate to this topic.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has developed a farmland conversion rating for corridor-type projects, such as this. Because of this, we would need to prepare a form called the NRCS-CPA-106. This form consists of a series of 10 questions. ADOT submits to the local NRCS office answers to this series of 10 questions.

So, what is considered prime and unique farmland? Prime and unique farmland has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed and other agricultural crops with minimum use of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides and labor without intolerable soil erosion.

We are all well aware of the Valley's growth and the recent housing boom. In all areas where these new developments are built, you also need infrastructure. This has been happening on a national scale as well. Large amounts of the nation's farmland are being converted from actual or potential agricultural use to nonagricultural uses. Because of this, Congress enacted the Farmland Protection Policy Act to protect this land as much as possible.

I will now let Scott Mars tell you the specifics as they relate to this project.

Scott Mars: It is a pleasure to speak at this forum again. This is my third time presenting to the SMCAT. I always enjoy it.

On this slide, the orange hatched area represents those areas within the Study Area that contain prime and unique farmland. Notice that the majority of this land is located within the Western Section.

Soil types and the presence of irrigation infrastructure are two key components when determining what lands are considered prime and unique farmland.

As Mark mentioned, there is a form that is completed that determines the farmland conversion impact and rating. The total combined score from the NRCS form (Part V) and federal agency (Part VI) are as follows. A score less than 160 means that the sites need not be given further consideration for protection, a score over 160 means that sites be given higher level of consideration for protection, and a higher level of evaluation to minimize or reduce impacts. It should be noted that there is no state or local program for the protection of farmland.

For the area, the total acreage to be converted directly in the W55 Alternative is 527 acres. The total acreage anticipated to be converted in the E1 Alternative is 156 acres. You can also see the impact ratings given for these alternatives. After ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration, and the NRCS had completed these forms, the total score was determined to be 194 for the W55 Alternative and 129 for the E1 Alternative. For the East Alternative it was determined that the land need not be given further consideration for protection.

How can construction-related impacts be reduced or eliminated? Section 402 of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System of the Clean Water Act requires that ADOT, or its contractor, obtain a permit prior to construction. This permit requires that a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPPP) be prepared. The EPA has determined that sediment is the number one pollutant in America's waterways. As a part of the SPPP, Best Management Plans (BMPs) are required to be developed and used. Examples of BMPs that ADOT could construct include silt barriers such as compost socks, sediment basins, limit vegetation removal and soil disturbance, or seed and mulch exposed slopes immediately after construction.

Are there any questions?

SMCAT Member: So in this section, the good of the few farmers outweigh the benefit of the many. Prime and unique farmland doesn't exist anymore in the Valley. I don't even know why we need to continue to study it.

Scott Mars: Studying prime and unique farmland is a requirement of NEPA.

SMCAT Member: The prime and unique farmland will all be gone anyway soon.

Tom Keller: Any other questions?

No response

Tom Keller: Thank you very much. I believe at this point we are ready for visitor's questions.

SMCAT Member: Where can we see the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan?

Ben Spargo: It has not yet been done for this potential project. We could show you one from a representative project.

Mike Bruder: The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan is completed during final design. It is given to the construction contractor, who is required to adhere to the specifications. The information in the plan is generally rather cumbersome.

Ben Spargo: Would this be something you would like to see?

SMCAT Member: Yes.

Tom Keller: We will now get to the public questions. If any are unable to be addressed, we will place them in the parking lot issues memorandum.

Public Written Question: Where can I get the detailed projected traffic volume data (cut-line analysis) for the South Mountain Freeway? This would be the traffic volume on which the \$400 million per year in time savings at \$16.25 per hour is based. Please provide enough source reference for a Freedom of Information Act request.

Timothy Tait: In general, the data you seek is on the project Web site in the December presentation that contains the traffic information. Ben, is this correct?

Ben Spargo: We may not have presented all of the information at the December meeting that you are requesting. It is somewhat cumbersome.

SMCAT Member: Yes, I think it would be interesting seeing some of that cumbersome data.

Ben Spargo: Yes, we will find a way to present that to you.

Tom Keller: I had a few comments from one person, which I will now read before responding.

Public Written Question: What metrics has the facilitator (Tom Keller) put into place to ensure that the SMCAT members are reporting to their “respective community organizations on a regular basis with the intent of consensus building within the community organization?”

Public Written Question: In the SMCAT Operating Agreement on page 5 under meeting attendance, it states, “SMCAT members who can not attend at least 65 percent of the SMCAT meetings may be asked to identify a permanent replacement from their organization.” Are there any SMCAT members who have failed to attend 65 percent of the meeting? If so, what actions have been taken?

Tom Keller: Here is my general response. Back in April [2007], the SMCAT created an operating agreement. It was constructed and designed around member representation. The members represent their organizations. It is their charge to make sure they take this information back to their respective groups. There is no way for me to check up on them. It is up to each member to do this on their own. In the same respect, ADOT informs all their constituents about the information in each of these meetings. That is their responsibility.

The SMCAT member attendance is included in all the member packets every month. It lists the members, who they represent and their attendance record. The SMCAT can make the call at any time. This will probably get more important as the SMCAT gets closer to making a recommendation on the freeway.

It is important how we manage what we do month to month and that we treat each other with respect. If the facilitators fail on these tasks, this body can bring the matter to myself

or Fred's attention. If it is brought to our attention, the situation will be rectified. That is the purpose of the operating agreement.

SMCAT Member: Was there something in the comment about the SMCAT being responsible for consensus building?

Tom Keller: I didn't state that.

Public Comment: It is stated in the SMCAT operating agreement.

Tom Keller: Prior to reconvening as a group, you may wish to think about how you may wish to vote for the SMCAT freeway recommendation. Perhaps, you think that a majority vote would be appropriate.

Public Written Question: Where are the Loop 202 ridge cuts with respect to the SRP 500 kV line over the same ridges?

Ben Spargo: In general, the freeway is paralleling the kV lines you mentioned. There are a couple of the towers on the ridges that are in the middle of the easement. The ridges are some distance offset from the proposed freeway alignment.

SMCAT Member: To the east or to the west?

Ben Spargo: Actually the lines are located to the north and east.

SMCAT Member: The easement for the kV line is on the Gila River Indian Community?

Ben Spargo: No, the easement is adjacent to the GRIC.

SMCAT Member: So will the Loop 202 have to cross underneath these power lines?

Ben Spargo: No, not specifically.

Public Written Question: You discuss how important it is to look at the regional picture to see the full impact of the freeway. So why are you refusing to consider the "big picture" fact that this freeway would become the main Phoenix truck bypass by default? This is obvious to anyone who looks at the location of this freeway on a regional map.

Timothy Tait: We have talked about this in the past. Truck traffic on the South Mountain Freeway is estimated to be 9 to 10 percent, which is consistent with other regional freeways. The truck bypass is considered Interstate 10 to Interstate 8 to State Route 85 to Interstate 10.

Public Question: So you think the truckers will observe this route even though the other route is a shorter distance?

Timothy Tait: That is the information that has been provided to us by the Maricopa Association of Governments.

SMCAT Member: The truckers are all waiting for you to complete this freeway. It is not the trucks from Los Angeles using this as a bypass route, it is all the regional trucks that will want to use the South Mountain Freeway as an actual functioning truck route. Saying it would be a bypass may be using the wrong word. When you say that 9 or 10 percent of the trucks would be using this route, did you interview Swift Transportation?

Timothy Tait: Remember that the Maricopa Association of Governments bases their projections based on what is happening in the community. ADOT relies on them for this information and the data provided from them reflects this.

Public Written Question: How can you have the audacity to provide estimates using models that have not been validated by comparing the estimates you arrive at with the actual costs/benefits that occur after a freeway is constructed?

Tom Keller: Your question needs to be framed in a respectful manner. We are going to do it that way or you will all need to get a new facilitator.

Public Comment: I apologize. That's easy enough to do. I allowed my feelings to get in the way.

Public Written Question: How can you provide estimates using models that have not been validated by comparing the estimates you arrive at with the actual costs/benefits that occur after a freeway is constructed?

Ben Spargo: The answer to your question would be found in the traffic analysis and not the economic analysis. The MAG model is reviewed by local and state agencies and is validated by the EPA (federal Environmental Protection Agency) during the air quality conformity analysis.

Public Comment: George Oamek is the one who said that they weren't.

Ben Spargo: Well, he doesn't work for MAG.

Public Comment: What is meant when you say a question will be directed to the parking lot?

Tom Keller: The parking lot issues memorandum is a document where SMCAT member or public questions are placed. The questions that are placed here are those questions that require further response from the study team than they could provide at the SMCAT

meeting. The answers to these questions appear in the parking lot issues memorandum, which is provided to the SMCAT members in their monthly packets and on the study Web site.

Ben Spargo: Yes, you will find this document on the study Web site where you can find the other presentation items.

Tom Keller: That's it for the public questions. There is one final topic. The August 28 SMCAT meeting will discuss Section 4(f) and 6(f) and cultural resources. We will also be setting some time aside to have a discussion about how the air quality meeting should be structured, such as membership and meeting format. Is this okay with you?

Affirmative response

SMCAT Member: After I asked about the change in the agenda, a number of people wanted to say that they also won't be here for the meeting. Can we take a vote on whether to push the Section 4(f) and 6(f) and cultural resource topics to another meeting?

Tom Keller: Let's see a show of hands.

Raised hands are counted

Tom Keller: We are looking at about five people who want this. We have had about 15 people at each meeting and we haven't had any issues with having a quorum lately.

Timothy Tait: If you are going to be absent, you can still send us written input that we can incorporate into the August 28 meeting, as if you were in attendance. As we circulate the agenda for review, we can solicit your questions and comments.

Tom Keller: That is a good idea.

SMCAT Member: At the next SMCAT meeting, can we discuss member attendance? I think it would be fair to take a vote regarding this issue.

Tom Keller: We can bring the operating agreement and look at those issues.

SMCAT Member: The operating agreement specifies who gets to vote for the freeway recommendation. In between now and the next meeting, we all can take a look at who has been missing.

Tom Keller: This may be difficult. Voting rights would be a rather big discussion. We also have a number of new people. I think we should have the operating agreement in front of us before we make that decision.

SMCAT Member: Can we have this vote at the August 28 meeting?

Tom Keller: Is there a motion?

SMCAT Member: I make a motion that we vote on continued membership at the August 28 meeting.

Tom Keller: Is there a second?

SMCAT Member: I second the motion.

Tom Keller: All in favor?

Majority of hands were raised

Tom Keller: We have eight in support and one against. The motion carries. Are there any other comments or suggestions?

SMCAT Member: A member of the public was asked to rephrase their question to be more respectful. I ask that we hold the SMCAT members to the same standard.

Tom Keller: This is over and above the statement I made at the beginning?

SMCAT Member: Yes, we make the public do it. The SMCAT members should be held to the same standard.

SMCAT Member: I haven't felt that the SMCAT has been disrespectful.

SMCAT Member: I think the facilitators have done a great job.

SMCAT Member: I understand that, but there has been at least one instance of someone being disrespectful.

SMCAT Member: I need a little more understanding what everyone thinks the boundaries should be.

SMCAT Member: Sometimes there are emotional outbursts.

SMCAT Member: We shouldn't let our emotions get into it.

SMCAT Member: We should be allowed to disagree.

Tom Keller: There is a difference between challenging the presenters and showing disrespect towards them. One of the things that would help that we can keep in mind is to better phrase the questions that are asked.

Tom Keller: Any other questions?

Public Comment: I appreciate having the parking lot issue memorandum defined.

Tom Keller: Okay, we will see you at the August 28 session at the same time and same place.

Fred Erickson: Please turn in your session feedback forms to us.

Meeting ended at 8:26 p.m.

Two blue comment/question cards and four preprinted questions were submitted after the meeting ended from the public. The information contained on the cards is as follows:

In a letter from Eric Anderson, Transportation Director, dated 8-4-08, he wrote, “This year, however, we face the unusual situation of having nearly all of the federal funds already programmed through 2013.” What impact does that have on the funding for the proposed South Mountain Freeway?

When ADOT releases the revised cost estimates to construct the proposed South Mountain Freeway on Pecos Road in the upcoming months, will the cost exceed \$2.5 billion? In the recent past, how close has the ADOT projected cost estimate been to the actual cost on segments for the Loop 202 and Loop 101?

When the SMCAT is asked for their input regarding the Action versus No-Action alternatives, how will that process be conducted? Will there be full disclosure by each SMCAT member or via secret ballot?

Who is the primary contact at ADOT for Proposition 203–Transportation and Infrastructure Moving Arizona’s Economy (TIME)? What percentage of that ballot initiative is ADOT paying?

If ADOT build this totally unnecessary freeway, some people will lose their homes. Some may lose their mental health. Some will lose their physical health. Some may lose their peace and quiet. Some will lose their views of the mountains and open land. We all will lose the current, natural beauty of the South Mountains! Take the freeway to the Westside of the Estrellas south and southeast to connect with the I-10 (way south of Pecos Road). Show us proof that you are explaining alternative routes! Update the cost of building this unnecessary freeway along Pecos Road. No build is the only solution to all the problems building this albatross would create.

Why doesn’t ADOT assume responsibility for errors such as the one on US 60 where dozens of drivers/passengers were stuck for five hours or more recently because the highway was flooded during a monsoon or rainfall? I wonder what such a delay would do to their time savings and cost. Why doesn’t ADOT admit that all this enormous expense

is a waste (planning and building the South Mountain Freeway that is)? Spend 10 percent of this much money and energy planning and building mass transit—and the Valley of the Sun would be all set!